

# SUCCESSFUL ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT OF UTERINE MYOMA

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**SUMMARY** – Our case report as the second one in the medical literature demonstrated successful outcome of acupuncture treatment of uterine myoma in terms of tumor size reduction and absence of hypermenorrhea and anemia with successful perinatal outcome with two healthy newborns after previous late miscarriage. Accordingly, acupuncture treatment can be used as an inexpensive, efficient and simple therapeutic option in the management of particular types of myoma.

**Key words:** *Uterine neoplasms – therapy; Myoma – therapy; Acupuncture; Case reports*

## Introduction

Uterine (fibro)myoma as the most common gynecologic tumor in women of reproductive age causes numerous complications such as pain due to its growth and size, infertility, menometrorrhagia, hypermenorrhea, anemia, and secondary degenerative changes (necrosis, torsion, colliquation, calcification), depending on its localization and topographic relationships. The management of myoma includes conservative methods such as therapy with GnRH analogs and progesterone receptor modulators (ulipristal acetate), myoma embolization, and myomectomy or hysterectomy, various complementary methods (homeopathy, acupuncture, phytotherapy), depending on the patient age, fertility, and complications<sup>1,2</sup>.

We present a case report as the second one in the literature demonstrating successful outcome of acupuncture treatment in terms of tumor size reduction and absence of hypermenorrhea and anemia with successful perinatal outcome after late miscarriage.

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## Case Report

In November 2005, a healthy primigravida was admitted in 17<sup>th</sup> week of gestation for preterm premature rupture of membranes and anhydramnios. Therapeutic abortion was induced due to antibiosis, anhydramnios and accelerated inflammation, and complete fetus and afterbirth were removed. Histopathologic finding indicated chorioamnionitis, whereas microbiology of the umbilical cord, placenta and amniotic fluid produced sterile finding. A 25-mm submucosal isthmic myoma with vascularization and increased Doppler sonographic resistance index 0.77 deforming the uterus (Fig. 1), 19-mm intramural myoma and 11-mm subserous myoma were verified by preconception and post-abortion transvaginal ultrasonography. Menses were prolonged, abundant and painful (chronic pelvic pain, dysmenorrhea and premenstrual syndrome) with subsequent sideropenic anemia with iron supplementation. Hysteroscopy was indicated by post-abortion findings and hypermenorrhea, but the patient preferred acupuncture treatment.

Therefore, classic manual acupuncture at DM 20, SP 6, IC 4, ST 36, RM 3,4,5 acupuncture points and *Shenmen* auriculoacupuncture points was administered by an acupuncturist in 10 sessions of 20 min-

utes twice weekly. Ultrasonography taken two months after this treatment revealed considerable myoma reduction from 2.5 cm to 0.8 cm, with decreased vascularization and Doppler sonographic resistance index (0.77:0.42), significantly reduced hemorrhage during menstruation, and absence of dysmenorrhea and premenstrual syndrome. The other two myomas were reduced to 0.5 cm.

The patient had two spontaneous pregnancies (in 2007 and 2009) and delivered healthy children at term with normal peripartum, postpartum and neonatal outcome. Follow up examinations after deliveries showed myomas of unchanged size with normal menstruation without hypermenorrhagia, chronic pelvic pain and anemia.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The favorable effect of acupuncture treatment on hypermenorrhea has recently been reported in only one study<sup>3</sup>, while Chinese traditional medicine recommends both acupuncture and phytotherapy in the management of hypermenorrhea and anemia associated with uterine myoma. Cakmak *et al.*<sup>3</sup> were the first to report in a respectable journal of reproductive medicine on the reduction of hypermenorrhea due to uterine fibroid (myoma) with electroacupuncture at SP 6 and ST 29 acupoints, which resulted in decreased uterine blood flow. Electroacupuncture was applied by seven licensed acupuncturists. The same

group of authors demonstrated the favorable effect of acupuncture treatment on the testicular artery hemodynamics<sup>4</sup>.

Although Chinese traditional medicine describes the possibilities of reducing the symptoms of myomatous uterus, only individual case reports have appeared in obstetric literature. Our case report as the second one in the literature demonstrated successful outcome of acupuncture treatment in terms of tumor size reduction and absence of hypermenorrhea, chronic pelvic pain and anemia. For women who want complementary nonsurgical treatment, acupuncture can be a good therapeutic option, as indicated by this and other literature reports<sup>5,6</sup>; however, the efficacy of this method should be definitely confirmed in additional clinical studies. Accordingly, acupuncture treatment can be used as an inexpensive, efficient and simple therapeutic option in the management of particular types of myoma.

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Fig. 1. Submucous myoma (type I), 2.5 cm before acupuncture treatment.

## Sažetak

## USPJEŠNO LIJEČENJE UTERINOG MIOMA AKUPUNKTUROM

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Ovaj prikaz slučaja je drugi objavljen u dosadašnjoj medicinskoj literaturi koji je dokazao uspješni ishod liječenja akupunkturom materničnoga mioma smanjivši veličinu tumora, a time i hipermenoreje i anemije, s uspješnim perinatalnim ishodom rađanja dvoje zdrave djece nakon prethodnog kasnog spontanog pobačaja. Akupunktura može biti jeftina, uspješna i jednostavna terapijska metoda u liječenju nekih oblika materničnih mioma.

Ključne riječi: *Uterini tumori – terapija; Miomi – terapija; Akupunktura; Prikazi slučaja*